



Trina Turk: The “Always Sunny” floral print is the perfect expression of the optimism of Trina Turk, Palm Springs and Modernism Week. Sunshine yellow has always been a touchstone for her, and for Spring 2018 it emerges as an important pop color in fashion and interior design. Turk opened her Palm Springs boutique in 2002, establishing her brand as cornerstone of the Uptown Design District. **About this project:** In celebration of Modernism Week, The Desert Sun will be featuring unique takes on the mod lifestyle in the desert by artists with close ties to the Coachella Valley through Monday. **Read more:** Palm Desert “Wave House” auction will make Modernism Week history. **29A**

Coachella farmworker, 83, gets his pension

Rebecca Plevin Palm Springs Desert Sun
USA TODAY NETWORK

Frank Valenzuela worked in the Coachella Valley’s okra fields and date farms for five decades. Now, nearly 20 years after he retired, the 83-year-old is receiving a check for more than \$176,000 — the amount that’s accumulated in his pension fund since he became eligible for benefits in 2000.

Valenzuela knew about the account, but had delayed collecting the money.

“Mañana,” he would say. Tomorrow. He had no idea how much he had accrued, said Ana Maria Sandoval, his partner of 32 years.

“We couldn’t believe it,” Sandoval said in Spanish on a recent evening, as she sat on a couch in the Coachella home they’ve owned for 16 years. She spoke on his behalf because he has Parkinson’s disease and trouble hearing.

Valenzuela’s former employer, Indio-based H.M.S. Agricultural Corp., began contributing to his pension in 1976,

when the company signed a labor contract with the United Farm Workers, the union co-founded by Cesar Chavez. The company continued paying into it until 2000, when Valenzuela stopped working due to a disability.

Such pension funds for farmworkers are extraordinarily rare. Today, the UFW-sponsored Juan de la Cruz Pension Plan remains the country’s first and only functioning plan for farmworkers, according to the union. While many aging farmworkers lack access to retire-

ment accounts or health insurance, the union’s plan pays about \$7 million a year to more than 4,600 beneficiaries.

But the UFW estimated there are nearly 400 potential beneficiaries who, like Valenzuela, are not collecting their funds. Sometimes they don’t know they’re eligible. Sometimes the union has trouble locating them, if they’ve moved or returned to their home countries.

See FARMWORKER, Page 6A

HE’S BACK! COACHELLA VALLEY, 3A



Former President Barack Obama has returned to the Coachella Valley for what is, at least, his eighth visit. Here’s how we know he’s here -- and playing golf, of course. DESERT SUN FILE PHOTO

USA TODAY

States are scrambling to protect voting systems

The Senate has been warned by the nation’s intelligence chiefs and charges have been filed about Russian meddling in U.S. elections. But with the first primaries just weeks away, little help is coming to states from Congress. But states are taking measures on their own. Mississippi encrypted their system and even paid a company — which failed — to hack into the new system. **1B**

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